

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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TAGS: EWWT, BEXP, NI

SUBJ: LAGOS PORT CONGESTION

REF : LAGOS 7137, 9327

1. SHIPPING PROBLEMS FOR AMERICAN EXPORTERS HAVE WORSENERED IN LAGOS PORT IN PAST TWO MONTHS BECAUSE OF NIGERIAN PORT AUTHORITY (NPA) INTERVENTION IN SCHEDULING OF SHIPS USING BERTH 9, NORMALLY A PRIORITY BERTH FOR THE AMERICAN WEST AFRICAN SHIPPING CONFERENCE. AT JUNE MEETING WITH NPA, CONFERENCE OFFICIALS AGREED TO ALLOW DOCKINGS AT BERTH 9 OF THREE NON-CONFERENCE LINE SHIPS DURING JUNE-SEPTEMBER WITH CONSEQUENT POSTPONEMENT OF REGULAR CONFERENCE UNLOADINGS.

2. RESULT OF THIS ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN GROWING NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FROM AMERICAN COMPANIES BOTH IN NIGERIA AND U.S. PROBLEM EXEMPLIFIED BY FARRELL LINE'S SS NEPTUNE WHICH ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO DOCK JULY 17 BUT NOW POSTPONED TO SEPTEMBER 8. SITUATION AGGRAVATED BY TWO WEEKS OF HEAVY RAIN AND FACT THAT THE THREE NON-CONFERENCE SHIPS AUTHORIZED BY NPA CARRIED FAR MORE CARGO THAN EXPECTED. LAST OF THIS UNHOLY TRIO, SS DOLPHIN, CURRENTLY STILL BEING UNLOADED. FURTHER FACTOR WAS THAT THREE CONFERENCE LINE VESSELS (ONE EACH FROM BARBER, ELDER
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DEMPATER AND FARRELL) ALL ARRIVED TOGETHER IN PORT IN MID-JULY.

3. ON POSITIVE SIDE, IT APPEARS THAT THE WORST IS OVER. PORT MANAGER HAS STATED UNOFFICIALLY THAT NO MORE INTERLOPERS WILL BE FORCED INTO THE SCHEDULE IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE. FARRELL LINE DIRECTOR HERE BELIEVES CONTROL WILL BE BACK IN HANDS OF CONFERENCE BY SEPTEMBER 15 AND THAT SITUATION WILL QUICKLY RETURN TO NORMAL ORDERLINESS. FARRELL HAS THUS RECOMMENDED TO ITS NEW YORK HEAD-QUARTERS THAT CONFERENCE NOT LODGE VIGOROUS PROTEST AT THIS TIME. IN ADDITION, CONFERENCE NOW HAS ACCESS TO NEW CONTAINER BERTH AND IS ABLE TO HANDLE UP TO 600 CONTAINERS PER MONTH. TO ATTRACT MORE BUSINESS, CONFERENCE HAS LOWERED CONTAINER RENTAL FEE FROM 500 TO 250 DOLLARS AND WILL HENCEFORTH ACCEPT CONTAINERS WHICH ARE 70 PERCENT FILLED RATHER THAN 80 PERCENT.

4. IN ORDER CIRCUMVENT LAGOS FRUSTRATIONS ONE AMERICAN FIRM (PUREWAY CORP., 301 42ND AVE., EAST MOLINE, ILLINOIS 61244, TEL. 309-755-2116) HAS LEASED NORWEGIAN SHIP FOR ONE YEAR TO CARRY GENERAL AND CONTAINER CARGO FROM NEW YORK TO COTONOU, BENIN. SHIP IS EXPECTED TO MAKE ONE DELIVERY EACH MONTH. PUREWAY HAS ENTERED INTO ANOTHER AGREEMENT WITH BENIN STATE TRANSPORT COMPANY TO HAUL GOODS FROM COTONOU TO LAGOS. IT INVITES OTHER U.S. FIRMS TO CONTACT ITS MOLINE HEADQUARTERS IN ORDER TO ARRANGE SHARED OCEAN AND LAND SHIPMENTS. WE SUGGEST DEPT. OF COMMERCE MAKE THIS INFO AVAILABLE TO POTENTIALLY INTERESTED PARTIES.

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